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VOL.1 NO.329-261

SOMERVILLE/MEDFORD MASS.

Tuesday May 6th, 2025

Mayor Ballantyne and Somerville City Council Approve Changes to Somerville Charter, Now Set to Advance to State Legislature



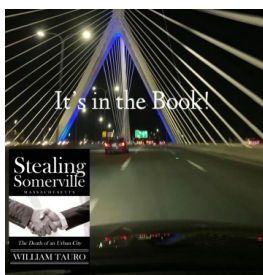
NEWS TALK OUT LOUD/SPEAK UP



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Somerville Police Real Life Somerville Police Stories Page



HOUSE APPROVES \$61.47 BILLION FISCAL 2026 STATE BUDGET (H 4000)



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William Tauro Pulls Nomination Papers For Mayor Of Somerville



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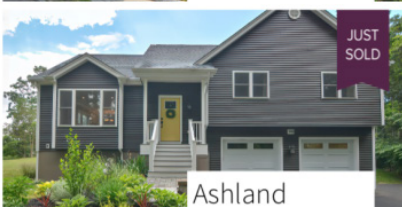
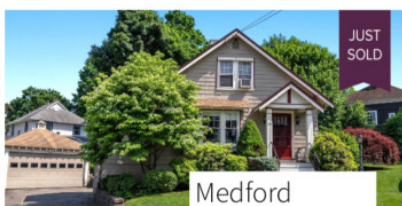
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We have been busy, but never too busy for you! These four properties were sold in one month! If you see something you would like to know more about, have any questions or are thinking about buying or selling a property, please don't hesitate to send us an email or give us call!

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Please send both forms and payment to:

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 489 Winthrop Street
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If you have any questions email us at MHSVarsitySoftball22@gmail.com
 MHS Varsity Softball is a non-profit organization in affiliation with Medford High School, our tax ID is listed below for your records.
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Artwork / Logos must be submitted to MHSVarsitySoftball22@gmail.com
 Deadline for artwork / logos is March 7th for full season exposure, any late submission banners will be hung starting tournament weekend.



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Somerville/Medford Remembering Frederick J. Sim



Obituary
Sim, Frederick J. – A lifelong resident of Somerville, passed away on April 30, 2025, surrounded by his loving family.

He was the beloved son of the late Elizabeth L. “Betty” (Donnelly) Sim and Victoriano A. Sumera. Loving father of Andrea Sim and her husband Michael Whalen of Somerville, James Grigg and his wife Michelle of Derry, NH, Sean

Sullivan and his wife Jennifer of Methuen. Fred was the dear brother to his siblings Elizabeth Boothe and her husband Robert of Billerica, Ellen Wilkin and her late husband Wayne of Upton, Paula Cameli and her husband Mark of Burlington, Ann Gubnitsky and her husband William of Woburn, Nina Sim and her wife Jenn Nunes of Burlington, Daniel Sim and his wife Linda of Somerville. Fred is predeceased by his

longtime partner Karen Grigg, sister Kathleen and brother Stephen. Fred is also survived by his cherished grandchildren Alexis, Hope, Jaylee, Kaitlyn, Austin, and the late Oliver, as well as countless nieces, nephews, cousins and other family and friends that will miss him dearly.

A Funeral procession will be held from the George L. Doherty Funeral Home, 855

Broadway (Powder House Sq.) Somerville, Monday morning, May 5, 2025 at 9am, followed by a Funeral Mass in St. Catherine Church, Somerville at 10:00.

Relatives and friends invited.

Calling hours Sunday, May 4, 2025, 4:30 – 7:30.

Interment private.

Somerville/Medford Remembering CHRISTOPHER PADRAIC EAGAN, Sr.



and Margaret (Clements) Eagan.

His family moved to Arlington at the age of 13 and he went on to graduate from Arlington High School. At the age of 20 he married his high school Sweetheart Marjorie (Covel) Eagan. Chris was an established HVAC project manager for over 40 years and enjoyed sharing his extensive knowledge of the trade. He bought a home in Tewksbury and raised his family there. You would often find him in the backyard, unwinding after work.

Chris, “Camper Eagan” was a lover of life, he enjoyed spending time outdoors with his family and friends: whether it be at the beach, camping, boating or riding anything that has a fast motor. He always had a tale to tell and a kind word for anyone he met. He had a larger-than-life presence and made everyone feel welcome and included.

He was a dedicated and loving husband and father. He leaves behind his beloved wife Marjorie (Covel) Eagan. His devoted children Christopher

Padraic Eagan, Jr. and his wife Samantha (Halley) Eagan of Hampstead, NH, and Lindsay (Eagan) Deshler and her husband Bryan Deshler of Tewksbury, MA. He was the loving grandfather of seven beautiful gifts of life and legacy to Delia, Christopher Padraic III, Rylan, Aurora, Maeve, Jason and Emerson and his faithful pup Ace.

Cherished brother to Cheryl and Brian Donovan, Suzanne and Morris Beverly, Robert and Bonnie Eagan, Tracy and Steven Breen, Kimberly and Chris Doyon. Also survived

by his dear in-laws Chris Covel, Michael and Kathy Covel, Elaine and Richard Medley, Paul and Carolyn Covel and many nieces, nephews, grand nieces and nephews and many friends.

A Funeral Mass will be held on Thursday, May 8th in St. Eulalia Church, 50 Ridge St., Winchester at 12:00PM, Noon. Please meet directly at Church.

Relatives and friends are respectfully invited to attend.

Interment will be private.

Obituary
CHRISTOPHER PADRAIC EAGAN, Sr. – was born on October 6, 1964 in Chelmsford, MA to the late Robert

Greetings it's Billy and WELCOME to my new Facebook page!



Thank you for hanging in there with us while we were dealing with the censoring/hacking of my original Facebook page!

My page has been restored bigger and better than before and now with over 16,000 Facebook followers! Please like and share my new Facebook page click link to follow: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100057320933117>

Again thank you for your continuous support and your patience.

Sincerely,
Billy Tauro



William Tauro Pulls Nomination Papers For Mayor Of Somerville



By William Tauro

A Vision for a Better Somerville: A City We're Proud to Call Home

I'm stepping forward today because I believe Somerville deserves leadership that listens, acts, and puts people first. As I pull nomination papers, I do so with a clear and determined mission: to make Somerville more affordable, more welcoming, and more responsive to the needs of all who call it home.

Housing That Works for Everyone

Housing costs in our city have skyrocketed, putting pressure on working families, seniors, and young people alike. We need bold, smart policies that increase affordable housing while protecting the character of our neighborhoods. I will push to build more truly affordable housing, especially for seniors and veterans who have given so much and deserve stability and dignity.

Support for Our Small Businesses

Small businesses are the

heart of Somerville. I will advocate for real support — not red tape. That means simplifying permits, offering grants and low-interest loans, and making sure small business owners have a seat at the table when policies are made.

A City Hall That Works for You

Bureaucracy shouldn't stand in the way of progress. I will fight to cut through the red tape, streamline the building department, and make City Hall more efficient and responsive. Residents and developers alike deserve clear processes and timely decisions.

Lowering Your Costs, Improving Your Quality of Life

You work hard for your money — and you shouldn't be overburdened with high property taxes, water bills, or electric rates. I'll fight for lower taxes and utility rates and invest in energy efficiency and partnerships that bring costs down for everyone.

Better Parking, Better Planning

Parking is a real concern across our city. We need smart, balanced solutions that increase access without compromising walkability or the environment. I'll work with residents to implement fair policies and improve enforcement and availability.

Respect and Dignity for Seniors and Veterans

Our seniors and veterans deserve more than just words — they deserve action. I will work to expand housing options, transportation access, and community services that improve quality of life and ensure no one is left behind.

Let's Build the Somerville We Deserve

This campaign is about all of us — our families, our futures, and our neighborhoods. It's about creating a city where people can afford to live, work, and retire in comfort. A city with pride, compassion, and common sense.

Join me. Let's bring real results back to Somerville. Let's build a city we are all proud to call home.



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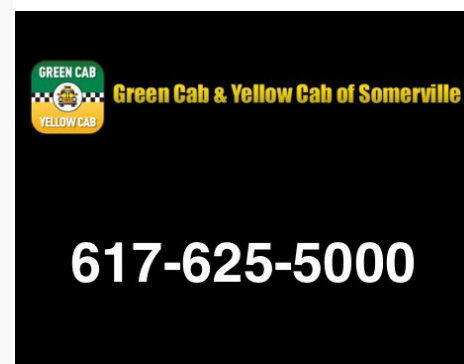
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Somerville Launching "Neighbors Talking to Neighbors" Dialogue Series



New initiative by Ballantyne Administration aims to build community through professionally facilitated conversation sessions

SOMERVILLE – Mayor Katjana Ballantyne is today announcing the launch of Neighbors Talking to Neighbors (N2N), a new City initiative aimed at strengthening community connections via open, respectful conversation, as ongoing cultural turmoil leads to increased feelings of

isolation, division, and fear.

The dialogue series will be led by Somerville's Department of Racial and Social Justice (RSJ) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and will offer a series of facilitated dialogues, trainings, and panel discussions focused on building understanding across different lived experiences.

"As forces across the country try to divide us, Somerville is choosing a different path: one rooted in empathy, compassion, and community," said Mayor Ballantyne. "My aim for our Neighbors Talking to Neighbors series is to give residents the tools and space to have honest conversations, build relationships across differences, and make our community stronger together."

The pilot series will focus on four pressing topics to both Somerville and the US at large:

- Race
- Immigration
- LGBTQIA+ Community
- Interfaith Relations

Session topics were identified based on feedback from multiple City departments and partners, including the SomerViva Office of Immigrant Affairs, Somerville Public Library, Somerville Public Schools, and the Somerville Police Department.

How It Works

Each of the four sessions will be professionally facilitated and open to all residents. Participants will agree to shared community guidelines designed to foster a respectful, welcoming environment. All sessions are free to attend, but registration is required.

Some topics will have separate times for youth and adults to facilitate age-appropriate conversations.

Upcoming Dialogue Sessions:
Session Topic: Race
Date: Wednesday, May 7
Place: Virtual

Time:
Youth Session: 3 – 4:30 p.m. Click to Register.
Adult Session: 6:30 – 8 p.m. Click to Register.

Session Topic: Immigration
Date: Friday, May 9
Place: Virtual

Time:
Youth Session: 3 – 4:30 p.m. Click to Register.
Adult Session: 6:30 – 8 p.m. Click to Register.

Session Topic: LGBTQIA+

Date: Wednesday, May 14

Place: Virtual
Time:
Youth Session: 3 – 4:30 p.m. Click to Register.
Adult Session: 6:30 – 8 p.m. Click to Register.

Session Topic: Interfaith Relations
Date: Wednesday, May 28
Place: Somerville High School Highland Forum (81 Highland Ave.)
Time: 7:30 – 9 p.m. Click to Register.

About Neighbors Talking to Neighbors
Neighbors Talking to Neighbors is part of Somerville's long-term commitment to fostering a connected, compassionate, and inclusive community. For more information, contact the Somerville Department of Racial and Social Justice at rsj@somervillema.gov.

HOUSE APPROVES \$61.47 BILLION FISCAL 2026 STATE BUDGET (H 4000)

By Bob Katzen

House 151-6, approved and sent to the Senate a \$61.47 billion fiscal 2026 state budget after three days of debate. The House version now goes to the Senate which will approve its own version. A House-Senate conference committee will eventually craft a compromise plan that will be presented to the House and Senate for consideration and then sent to Gov. Maura Healey.

"The House's fiscal year 2026 budget makes key investments that better support Massachusetts students and families, that increase access to affordable health care and that provide for a safer

and more reliable public transportation system – all without raising taxes," said House Speaker Ron Mariano (D-Quincy). "In a moment of incredible uncertainty at the federal level, our budget is proof that government can be both fiscally responsible and an agent of good, the kind of government that our residents deserve."

"This budget builds off the successes of the last few years by prioritizing our residents," said Rep. Aaron Michlewitz (D-Boston), chair of the House Committee on Ways and Means. "Whether it is greater investments into programs like housing stability, public transportation or early education, these initiatives are a reflection of our

shared values. By reinvesting in the people of the commonwealth, we will continue to make our economy more competitive and equitable for years to come."

"The fiscal year 2026 budget is a bloated budget that is not attached to the reality of our fiscal situation, and there is a multitude of reasons I could not support it," said Rep. Ken Sweeney (R-Hanson). "Although there are many good aspects relating to municipal funding that I was happy to see included, it does not go far enough in that realm and continues to poorly prioritize funds. With the fiscal uncertainty relative to the federal government, it is reckless to pretend that

this budget should be business as usual and support a budget increase of 7 percent year-over-year and nearly 50 percent in just six years."

"Beacon Hill has once again shown its commitment to secrecy over sound fiscal policy," said Paul Craney, executive director of the Mass Fiscal Alliance. "The House tacked on \$81 million in new spending over their original proposal. The last three days showed the House has no fiscal restraint. This was negotiated behind closed doors and rammed through massive, opaque consolidated amendments ... At a time when the state is facing declining tax revenues, increased outmigra-

tion and deep structural budget challenges, lawmakers should be tightening the belt, not throwing more money into a budget crafted in the shadows."

(A "Yes" vote is for the budget. A "No" vote is against it.)

Rep. Christine Barber Yes Rep. Mike Connolly Yes Rep. Paul Donato Yes Rep. Erika Uytterhoeven Yes

MEDFORD VFW POST 1012 HAS A NEW COMMANDER

Congratulations to The Medford VFW on its new Installation of Commander Steve McLaughlin as he takes charge.

Best of luck and we can't wait to see all the good things that you will bring to the VFW under your guidance and leadership!

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A special menu and special hours will be posted on our website as well as our social media channels. Please stay tuned

for any and all details.

As always our gift cards will be available through our website, over the phone and in person. Starting Tuesday, for every gift card purchase over \$100, we will add an additional \$20 gift card as a way to thank you for your support.

If there is anything in particular you would like to see from us or if you need help preparing food at home for your families please reach out and we will do

our best to help. Whether it be recipe ideas with random things you might have purchased or if you run out of something that you need that we can help with please don't hesitate to ask.

A Tavola Restaurant Winchester outdoor patio dining is open for business & takeout orders: (781)729-1040 34 Church St Winchester

Thank you for your continued support.



“Slice of the City” Pop-Up Series Returns to Somerville Wards This May

Connect with Mayor, City Officials, and neighbors over free pizza, refreshments, and kids’ activities in a Somerville park near you

SOMERVILLE— Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and the City Council are excited to announce the return of “Slice of the City,” a pop-up event series that aims to bring City Hall to local green spaces for evenings of pizza, conversation, and community connection.

The series consists of seven early evening, drop-in style meetups taking place at

parks and playgrounds in each of Somerville’s seven wards. All events will run from 5 to 7 p.m. throughout the month of May.

The drop-in style gatherings are an opportunity to mingle with Mayor Ballantyne, your Ward and At-Large City Councilors, School Committee members, and State Delegation representatives, as well as City staff and neighbors.

“As a public servant, Slice of the City has been a great new way to connect with constituents” said Mayor Katjana Ballantyne. “It’s a chance to share a slice,

share a story, and further build community in a place we all call home. I can’t wait to see familiar faces and meet new neighbors this May.”

Staff on hand will be happy to discuss neighborhood projects, City programs and services, questions or concerns, or your favorite pizza topping. Members of our 311 team will also be in attendance to intake service requests. Meanwhile, kid’s activities, refreshments and pizza will be provided.

Slice of the City Schedule Visit somerillema.gov/mysomer-

ville to look up your ward. In the event of inclement weather, events will be rescheduled to a later date:

Thursday, May 1: Ward 1 at Chuckie Harris Park (17 Cross St. East)

Monday, May 5: Ward 4 at Healey Schoolyard (5 Meacham St.)

Tuesday, May 6: Ward 5 at Trum Field Playground (1 Franey Rd. At Cedar St.)

Monday, May 12: Ward 3 at Prospect Hill Park (68 Munroe St.)

Tuesday, May 13: Ward 6 at Powderhouse Park (850 Broadway, Powderhouse side)

Tuesday, May 20: Ward 7 at Lou Ann David Park (1060 Broadway)

Wednesday, May 21: Ward 2 at Lincoln Park (290 Washington St., near Argenziano entrance)

For all event information and updates, visit somerillema.gov/slice.

AUTOMATIC RENEWAL OF PROFESIONAL LICENSES (S 275)

By Bob Katzen

Would automatically renew professional licensures as opposed to requiring the license holder to submit an online application or wait on a renewal to be approved by

a licensure board.

Supporters said that this would be beneficial in more prompt renewal times for licenses, creating a more streamlined process that takes the burden off those who issue

licenses and those who hold them.

“I believe that this system of automatic renewal for those who must hold a professional licensure in Massachusetts will create an easier process for all

involved in this system,” said sponsor Sen. Patrick O’Connor (R-Weymouth). “Automatic renewal would save the time and effort on the end of those who need their license renewed promptly and it may have not been a top priority

among a demanding work schedule. Automated systems would keep errors at a minimum while ensuring renewal information is complete and consistent.”

WAIVE SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER REQUIREMENT (H 451)

By Bob Katzen

Would standardize what forms of identification can be used by applicants when applying for occupational licenses from the Division of Occupational Licensure and the Department of Public Health. The measure would allow individuals to submit a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) or another

form of verified identification in place of a social security number.

“Currently, there is no uniform policy across state licensing boards,” said sponsor Rep. Francisco Paulino (D-Methuen). “Some, like the Board of Registration in Nursing, already allow applicants to use a TIN. This means a qualified applicant

can become a Registered Nurse but may be barred from becoming a Certified Nurse Assistant because the Certified Nurse Assistant Board does not accept a TIN. The inconsistency creates unnecessary barriers, particularly for tax-paying immigrants and others who are legally authorized to work or who are otherwise contributing members of

our workforce.” “This reform is especially urgent in industries facing significant labor shortages, including healthcare, construction and other trades,” continued Paulino. “Allowing more qualified individuals to obtain licensure helps meet workforce demands and strengthens the state’s economy. By passing [the

bill], Massachusetts would promote fairness, workforce inclusion and consistency, ensuring that professional opportunity is determined by skill and qualification—not paperwork inconsistencies between different state boards.”

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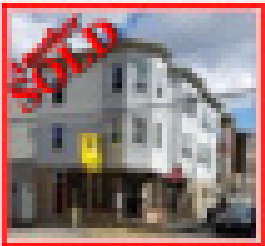


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The Somerville/Medford News Weekly

Here's your weekly News Talk Shout Out dosage continued from page 2



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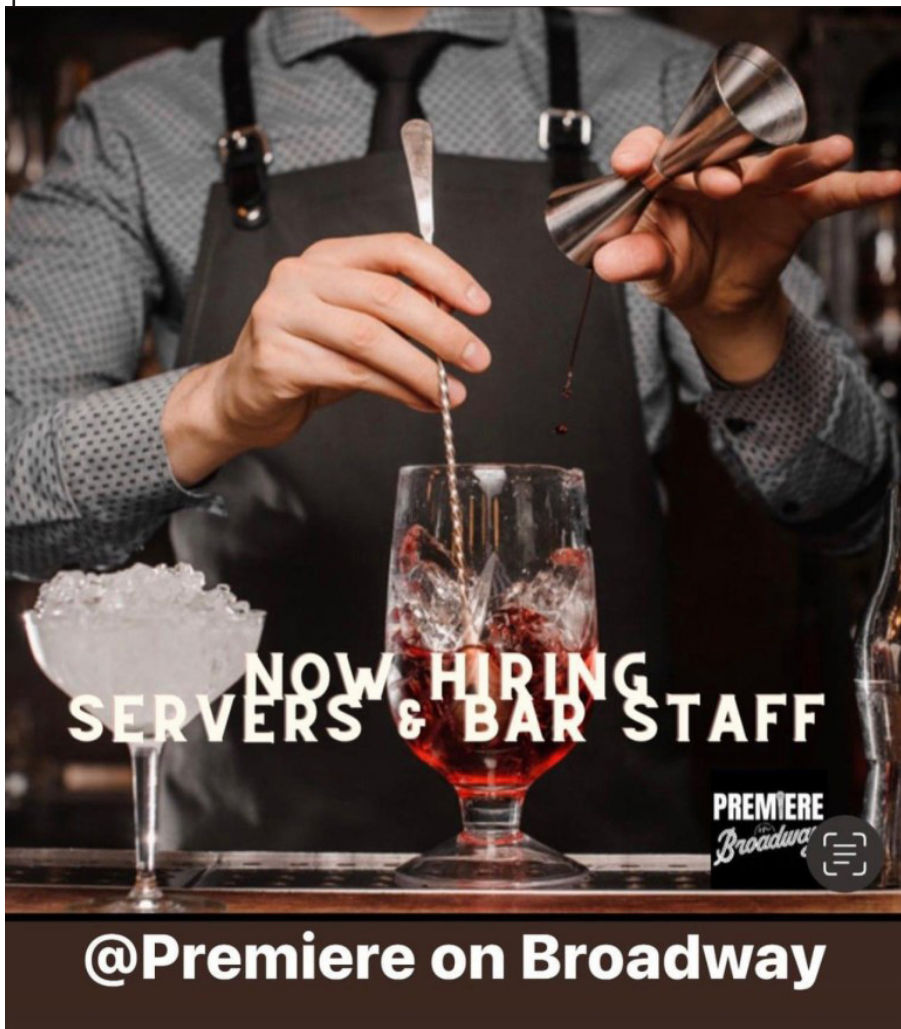
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A LOOK BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE "MAKING OF THE BUDGET"

<p>By Bob Katzen Most of the decisions on which representatives' amendments are included or not included in the budget are made behind closed doors. Of the more than 1,650 budget amendments proposed last week, most of them were bundled into consolidated "mega" amendments. This year</p>	<p>there were seven mega amendments and all were easily approved on roll call votes. The system works as follows: Individual representatives file amendments on various topics. All members then pitch their amendments to Democratic leaders who draft consolidated amendments</p>	<p>that include some of the individual representatives' amendments while excluding others. The categories of consolidated amendments include many subjects including programs relating to public safety, judiciary, energy, environmental affairs, housing, labor and economic development.</p>	<p>Supporters of the system say that any representative who sponsored an excluded amendment can bring it to the floor and ask for an up or down vote on the amendment itself. They say this system has worked well for many years. Opponents say that most members do not bring their amendment to</p>	<p>the floor for an up-or-down vote because that is not the way the game is played. It is an "expected tradition" that you accept the fate of your amendment as determined by Democratic leaders</p>
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Somerville Invited to Open House Sharing Western Pearl Street Concept Design Options on Wednesday, May 7

Community Engagement will Help Shape New Design Prioritizing Safety and Accessibility of Gilman Square Neighborhood Street

SOMERVILLE – The western segment of Pearl Street (between McGrath Highway and Medford Street) sits in the center of the Gilman Square Neighborhood not far from Somerville High School, the MBTA Green Line Station, Community Path, and Ed Leathers Park. It is home to many residents, a variety of local businesses, and serves many different purposes.

Currently, some of the sidewalks are in poor condition with cracked concrete panels and the roadway needs to be repaved. Fortunately, this part of Pearl Street is prioritized for reconstruction through Somerville's Pavement and Sidewalk Management Program (somervillema.gov/paving). However, instead of just rebuilding the street as is, the City is looking to reimagine it—prioritizing safety and accessibility.

Like many streets in Somerville, Pearl Street is relatively narrow, meaning we have limited space with which to meet a wide range of community needs from safer crossings and protected bicycle facilities to better bus stops and

curbside access for motor vehicles. This is why community engagement is critical to the success of the project and has informed the initial concept designs.

Learn More About the Design at May 7 Community Open House The City gathered feedback from community members about their safety concerns and priorities for the street through community meetings and events, surveys, on-street outreach, and small business visits in the fall of 2024.

As a next step in the process, Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, Ward 4 Councilor Jesse Clingan, Ward 1 Councilor Matt McLaughlin, and City staff are excited to invite community members to come to an open house to learn more about the project, review the preliminary concept design options, and share their input.

When: Wednesday, May 7 from 5 to 7:30 p.m. (Inclement weather date: May 8)
Where: Ed Leathers Park between Skilton Ave. and Walnut St.

At the outdoor open house, community members can explore different stations describing aspects of the design and talk directly to the project team about their ques-

tions and comments. Pizza will be provided.

If community members cannot attend, there will be multiple other ways to share feedback such as through an online feedback survey, a virtual office hour, a street outreach pop-up, and more.

Visit somervillema.gov/western-pearl for more details.

More About the Project
Along with new sidewalks and new street pavement, the Western Pearl Street Reconstruction Project will bring a range of safety and accessibility improvements including but not limited to:

Crosswalk improvements
When the City reconstructs the street, new crossings can be installed, raised crosswalks or intersections can be incorporated, and all crossings will have accessible curb ramps. The City also incorporates "Clear Corners" where parking is restricted within 20 feet of a crossing. Parked vehicles near crosswalks can block views of people crossing the street. By ensuring vehicles aren't parked too close, the City can increase visibility for all users and reduce the likelihood of crashes.

Protected bike lanes
Protected bike lanes separate people biking from motor vehicle traffic. They increase comfort for people of all ages and abilities biking, reduce overall crash and injury risk, eliminate the threat of "dooring" from parking vehicles, and reduce potential conflicts with people driving and biking.

Western Pearl Street is designated in the City's Bicycle Network Plan for protected bike lanes in both directions. However, due to its narrow nature, to have bicycle travel in each direction, the City would either have to remove all curbside access or make the street one-way the street for motor vehicles. During outreach last fall, the City asked community members if they preferred options that either explored two-way bicycle travel with no curb access or designs that made the street one way for bikes or cars to preserve curb access on one side for some parking, expanded bus stops, shorter crossings, or tree bump-outs. The City plans to present concept design options informed by the community's feedback.

Trees
The City aims to install new trees and create more space for existing trees to increase the health and

longevity.
Bus-rider experience improvements
The MBTA Route 80 bus currently travels on Western Pearl Street. We are exploring ways to create more waiting space at bus stops and reduce bus delay by allowing buses to stop in the travel lane rather than having to pull over and pull back into traffic. As part of Bus Network Redesign, the MBTA is planning to remove the Route 80 from Pearl Street, however, there is no schedule at this time for this change.

Parking regulation changes
There can be trade-offs between safe, sustainable transportation options and parking given the limited space on the City's streets. At the same time, many residents, health service providers, and business operators currently rely on (and will continue to rely on) access to parking. Within this in mind, the City is looking at creative ways to approach regulating curb use in the project and area and aims to work with local businesses, community service providers and neighbors on strategies that make the best use of limited parking resources.

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PUBLIC SAFETY GRANT FUNDING (H 4000)

By Bob Katzen

House 28-128, rejected an amendment that would prohibit any city or town’s eligibility for public safety related grant funding from being contingent upon that municipality’s compliance with the MBTA Communities Act.

The MBTA Communities Act, according to the state’s website, requires that an MBTA community “must have at least one zoning district of reasonable size in which multi-family housing is permitted as of right and meets other criteria” including minimum gross density of 15 units per acre; and a location not more than 1/2 mile from a commuter rail station, subway station, ferry terminal or bus station. No age restrictions can be applied and the district must be suitable for families with children.

“Earlier this year, the Healey Administration changed the rules for the Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant program by denying grants to communities that are not in compliance with the MBTA Communities zoning law,” said amendment sponsor Rep. Brad Jones (R-North Reading). “Although the huge public outcry that followed led the governor to reverse course and restore this grant funding, it is important that we add language to the zoning law to ensure that this does not happen again. Tying public safety grant funding to compliance with the MBTA Communities Act is simply unacceptable, as it not only jeopardizes the public, but also the police, firefighters and other first responders who work to keep our communities safe.”

Rep. Richard Haggerty (D-Woburn) opposed the amendment and said it is not needed because the Healey Administration showed its flexibility and announced that these grants are no longer at risk for noncompliant communities.

(A “Yes” vote is for the amendment. A “No” vote is against it.)

Rep. Christine Barber No

Rep. Mike Connolly No

Rep. Paul Donato No

Rep. Erika Uyterhoeven Didn’t Vote



Honoring Memorial Day in Somerville: Parade and Ceremony of Remembrance on May 25



Community encouraged to sign up as parade participants and volunteers

SOMERVILLE— Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and the Somerville De-

partment of Veterans’ Services are announcing that Somerville’s Memorial Day parade will be held on Sunday, May 25.

The parade will step off at 11 a.m. from Davis Square, proceeding west on Holland Street through Teele Square and onto Broadway, ending at the Veterans Cemetery between Alewife Brook Parkway and North Street. This year’s

Grand Marshal is Somerville resident and Medal of Honor recipient Thomas G. Kelley.

The City’s annual remembrance ceremony will immediately follow at the Somerville Veterans’ Memorial Cemetery to honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice while in service to our country. The ceremony will feature remarks by Mayor Ballantyne and Director of

Veterans’ Services Jerome Thomas.

Sign Up to Join the Parade or Volunteer

Somerville community groups, organizations, and local businesses are encouraged to participate and march along with local Veterans and first responders, as well as volunteers to help the parade run smoothly.

To sign up to participate, or volunteer, please complete a brief form at somervillema.gov/memorialday or call 617-625-6600 x 4700. The deadline to register as a parade participant is Friday, May 2.

Please contact the Somerville Department of Veterans’ Services at veterans@somervillema.gov or call 617-625-6600 x 4700 with questions.

Somerville PorchFest 2025: Important Safety & Event Updates

SOMERVILLE— The Somerville Arts Council is excited to announce PorchFest 2025, the citywide live music event, is returning on Saturday, May 10, from 12 to 6 p.m. (rain date: Sunday, May 11).

To ensure a safe, enjoyable, and well-organized experience for all, this year’s event will feature new safety measures and structural updates designed to enhance the day for both performers and residents. All information is available on somervillearts council.org/porchfest

Key Updates & Changes for 2025:

Application Process & Deadline: Deadline to submit an application is Thursday, April 10, at 11:59 p.m. Applying does not guarantee participation.

Event Map to Be Issued Early: A map of the bands and their locations will be available several weeks before the event to make it easier for residents, businesses, and participants to plan ahead.

Street Limitations: Streets and locations identified

by the Somerville Fire and Engineering Departments as being part of a key safety route will not be able to host performances. These safety routes have been identified to ensure safe pedestrian and traffic flow as well as emergency vehicle travel. Residents on safety routes are encouraged to partner with neighbors on a nearby designated street.

Block Party Submissions: Block parties must also apply through Citizen Serve to request a block party permit. Applications will be open March 10 – April 10 and will be reviewed based on the street safety restrictions noted above.

Emergency Management Plan: The Mayor’s Office has convened an Emergency Management Team to oversee a central command station on Porchfest. This team includes the Police Chief, Fire Chief, DPW, Emergency Management Department, and Arts Council.

Ambassador Volunteer Program: Volunteers will be stationed throughout event zones to assist visitors, direct people to porta-potty locations, monitor safety,

and serve as points of contact.

Official PorchFest Badges: Approved porches will receive an official PorchFest badge that must be displayed on the day of the event. Ambassadors will help ensure compliance.

Additional Information:

Schedule: Performances will take place in three two-hour zones across the city: West of Willow Street: 12–2 p.m. Willow to Central Street: 2–4 p.m. East of Central Street: 4–6 p.m.

Event Guidelines & Rules: To keep PorchFest safe and enjoyable for all, please follow these rules: Be respectful of porch hosts, neighbors, and residents—do not loiter on non-PorchFest properties Public alcohol consumption is prohibited Use public transportation to reduce traffic and parking congestion Stay on sidewalks to allow cars to pass safely Use designated porta-potties Tip the bands (cash or digital) to

support local musicians

The updates to Porchfest’s safety and organization were shaped with help from the Porchfest Committee, composed of five members of the Somerville community including a business owner, a resident, a musician, a Department of Public Works representative, and a member of the Arts Council staff.

“PorchFest is one of Somerville’s most popular events, and to keep it going strong, we’ve made some important safety and sustainability updates,” said SAC Director Gregory Jenkins. “We’re limiting performances on key emergency routes and refining the application process to ensure the event stays safe and accessible for everyone. These changes will help PorchFest thrive for years to come, and we need the community’s support to make it happen. I also want to thank the PorchFest Committee for their help creating these recommendations, and everyone who helps bring this amazing event to life.”

History of Porchfest In 2011, the Somerville Arts Council launched PorchFest, a citywide community music

event that invites residents to celebrate local musicians by hosting mini-concerts on their porches and stoops, or driveways and yards. Think of it like Somerville Open Studios, but for musicians. Rather than a traditional festival, PorchFest brings neighbors together to share and enjoy live music ringing out from porches across the city.



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PROTECT SURVIVORS OF SPOUSAL ABUSE FROM ALIMONY PAYMENTS (S 1236)



By Bob Katzen

Would give the courts the authority to terminate alimony payments and deny future alimony petitions if the spouse receiving the payments has been convicted of spousal abuse.

The bill defines "abuse" as including "attempting to cause or

causing physical harm, placing a spouse in fear of imminent serious physical harm and causing a spouse to engage involuntarily in sexual relations by force, threat or duress."

"Every year, more than 12 million people in the U.S. experience violence by an intimate partner," said sponsor Sen. Jake Oliveira (D-

Ludlow). "Yet, in Massachusetts, it is possible for survivors of spousal abuse, who have already taken the near impossible step of leaving an abusive marriage, to be required to pay alimony to their abuser after they escape that relationship." He noted that he filed the measure to ensure that survivors are protected from further abuse.

DISABLED ADULTS AND CHILD CUSTODY (S 1164)

By Bob Katzen

Would prevent a parent's disability to be considered a negative factor in determining custody or parenting time with a child unless there is specific evidence that there is a link with the parent's disability and a child's alleged harm. It must

also show that this harm cannot be prevented or alleviated by accommodation.

"Parents with disabilities sometimes lose custody of their children due to their disabilities," said sponsor Sen. Joan Lovely (D-Salem). "This bill seeks to address this issue by requiring

courts to find evidence of any harms when making custody decisions, explained in writing, and requiring supportive measures when appropriate that can be taken to avoid harm to the parents and their children. It will potentially help keep families together."

REPRESENTATIVES ARE NO LONGER ELIGIBLE FOR PER DIEMS

By Bob Katzen

Legislators are no longer entitled to collect "per diems" to reimburse them for mileage, meals and lodging expenses for

travel from their home to the Statehouse. These reimbursements were discontinued in 2017.

They were not taxable income

and ranged from \$10 per day for legislators who reside in the greater Boston area to \$82 for Western Massachusetts lawmakers and \$100 for those in Nantucket.

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MUNICIPAL TAX AMNESTY (H 4000)

By Bob Katzen

House 25-132, rejected an amendment that would authorize cities and towns to conduct a municipal tax amnesty program over a two-month period, as determined by the local legislative body, any time prior to June 30, 2027. It specifically authorizes communities to waive any or all penalties, fees, charges and accrued interest if the original overdue tax assessment is

paid in full.

“This proposal would clear the way for the first municipal tax amnesty since 2003,” said amendment sponsor Rep. Brad Jones (R-North Reading). “I filed this as a flexible local option for cities and towns to generate additional revenues by giving residents an incentive to pay their overdue property and excise taxes. This amnesty program would not only

help communities but also would benefit individuals who have outstanding tax liabilities so they can wipe the slate clean by settling their original debt.”

Rep. Adrian Madaro (D-East Boston) opposed the amendment and said there is uncertainty in the budget writing process that we’re dealing with given the recent events in Washington, D.C. He said that the House drafted

a budget taking into account current municipal collections in order to develop local aid and apportionments. He noted that adopting this measure right now may undermine those efforts and require the House to reassess how much local aid will be needed to ensure cities and towns have the resources they need again, at a time when we don’t know what holes will need to be plugged at the federal level.

(A “Yes” vote is for the amendment. A “No” vote is against it.)

Rep. Christine Barber No Rep. Mike Connolly No Rep. Paul Donato No Rep. Erika Uytterhoeven No

RIGHT TO SHELTER (H 4000)

By Bob Katzen

House 27-129, rejected an amendment that would place further restrictions on the state’s right to shelter law by limiting participation in the commonwealth’s emergency housing assistance program to U.S. citizens who have resided in Massachusetts for at least six months.

“Over the last two years, the state’s emergency shelter system has been plagued by cost overruns, fueled by the migrant crisis, which has led to waiting lists for services,” said Rep. Brad Jones (R-North Reading). “This amendment would help restore the original intent of the right to shelter law by ensuring that

Massachusetts residents in need have access to emergency shelter.”

Rep. Alice Peisch (D-Wellesley) opposed the amendment and said it would unfairly restrict eligibility for the emergency shelter program to citizens of the United States and make legal residents ineligible. She argued that it also raises constitu-

tional questions around defined length of residency. She said that the state has put in a number of controls on this program and the number of people using it and seeking to use the program, is now down to 4,804 families.

(A “Yes” vote is for the amendment. A “No” vote is against it.)

Rep. Christine Barber No Rep. Mike Connolly No Rep. Paul Donato No Rep. Erika Uytterhoeven Didn’t Vote

TOXIC CHEMICALS IN CHILDREN’S PRODUCTS (H 384)

By Bob Katzen

Would ban toxic chemicals, known as PFAs, in children’s products. The bill would require the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to establish a list of known toxic chemicals and require manufacturers and distributors to pay fees and submit biannual reports disclosing if these chemicals are in products they make or

distribute for children under 12.

After three years, the measure would ban the use of these chemicals in products for children three and under, children’s personal care products and anything designed to be put in a child’s mouth, such as a pacifier. The bill also allows DEP to restrict toxic chemicals from products for children 4-12 if scientific research

shows a possible exposure risk. Safer alternatives must replace all toxic chemicals.

Supporters said the bill intends to reduce or reverse rising rates of noncommunicable illness that a strong body of scientific evidence links to early life exposure to toxic chemicals, including childhood and young adult cancers, neurodevelopmental diseases such as ADHD, autism, be-


havioral and learning challenges, reproductive disorders and asthma.

“We now know how damaging these forever chemicals are to humans, and especially vulnerable are children who cannot choose for themselves how to avoid unnecessary illnesses,” said sponsor Rep. Jim Hawkins (D-Attleboro). “It is our job and responsibility to protect them from harm

and to use alternatives in the products we make and market to families. My office is grateful for the steadfast advocacy of organizations such as Clean Water Action, whose mission is to keep harmful PFAS out of children’s products.”

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ALLOW DETAINMENT BY IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT (H 4000)

By Bob Katzen

House 25-131, rejected an amendment that would provide a mechanism for law enforcement and the courts to detain individuals for United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) if the person poses a direct threat to public safety. It would specifically allow for the detention of individuals for possible immigration violations for up to 12 hours upon receipt of a written request and warrant from ICE.

“This amendment is an attempt

to respond to the 2017 Commonwealth v. Lunn decision, in which the Supreme Judicial Court determined the authority to honor ICE detainer requests is not expressly permitted under current statutes,” said amendment sponsor Rep. Brad Jones (R-North Reading). “The amendment is a relatively modest proposal because the authorization is limited to ICE detainer requests for individuals who pose a serious threat to public safety for engaging in, or being suspected of engaging in, specific crimes such as terrorism or espionage, criminal street gang

activity, sexual abuse or exploitation, human trafficking, unlawful firearm possession and drug distribution or trafficking.”

Rep. Daniel Cahill (D-Lynn) opposed the amendment and said there are criminal detainees issued by ICE and there are civil detainees. He noted that as a former prosecutor, he understands that when there’s a criminal warrant for an ICE detainer from a defendant and they are in the custody of Massachusetts, there is a cooperation with ICE to ensure that upon release of that

defendant, or sometimes while a case is pending, ICE is notified and they’re allowed to come pick up that defendant. What we’re talking about here would be for Massachusetts to cooperate with the federal government in civil detainees. The law says here in Massachusetts, we are not to detain someone a moment — not 12 hours, not 12 seconds. When your case is concluded, you leave. What the federal government wants us to do is expend resources to hold people beyond that time. That’s a constitutional problem.

(A “Yes” vote is for the amendment. A “No” vote is against it.)

Rep. Christine Barber No Rep. Mike Connolly No Rep. Paul Donato No Rep. Erika Uytterhoeven Didn't Vote

HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN TRANSPARENCY (S 685)

By Bob Katzen

Another measure heard by the Financial Services Committee would require health insurance plans that are regulated by the state to include the following statement on plan members’ identification cards: “This health plan is fully-insured, subject to all Massachusetts insurance laws.”

Supporters said that this simple

requirement would make it much easier for patients to understand what rights they have and what treatments are covered under their health plans. They noted that roughly half of Massachusetts residents with employer-based health insurance are in “fully-insured” plans regulated under Massachusetts law, while the other half are in “self-funded” plans that are federally regulated. They noted that the distinction is impor-

tant, because fully insured plans are subject to state mandates guaranteeing access to treatment for more than a dozen medical conditions and for mental health conditions generally; and self-funded plans are not subject to these mandates.

“I filed [the bill] to make it easier for patients, providers and advocates to understand what rights and coverage apply to a given health insurance plan,”

said sponsor Sen. Cindy Creem (D-Newton). “Right now, it’s often unclear whether a plan is subject to Massachusetts law – which can mean the difference between getting essential health services covered or not. This bill would add a simple line to insurance cards to clarify that distinction, following the lead of at least a dozen other states, including Connecticut and New York.”

CONSUMER PROTECTION AND PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE COMMITTEE HEARING – The Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure held a hearing on several pieces of legislation including:

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REQUIRE ID TO VOTE (H 4000)

By Bob Katzen

House 25-131, rejected an amendment that would require voters to present a valid form of identification, such as a driver's license or passport, when voting. It also directs the Secretary of State's office to develop a program to make a Massachusetts

photo identification card available free of charge for voting purposes.

"Establishing a voter ID requirement would help poll workers verify that an individual is properly registered to vote in Massachusetts," said Rep. Brad Jones (R-North Reading). "This amendment would

also allow individuals who do not have an ID to secure one free of charge through a new program that would be run through the Secretary of State's office, which oversees elections."

Rep. Daniel Hunt (D-Dorchester) opposed the amendment and said

that in states that already require this, it's often used as a tool, not a rule, and it's used to disenfranchise voters. He noted that the Elections Law Committee has not yet held hearings on several bills that are being considered relative to voter ID and urged members not to rush this amendment through the

House but rather wait until the committee holds a public hearing on the bills.

(A "Yes" vote is for the amendment. A "No" vote is against it.)

Rep. Christine Barber No
Rep. Mike Connolly No
Rep. Paul Donato No
Rep. Erika Uytterhoeven No

WHEELCHAIR REPAIRS (H 1278)

By Bob Katzen

The Financial Services Committee held a hearing on a bill that would mandate a ten-business day deadline for the completion of motorized

wheelchair repairs, with a couple of exceptions.

"The bill ... models a law recently passed in Connecticut," said sponsor Rep. Jim O'Day (D-West Boylston). "This proposal

requires the repair of a motorized wheelchair to be completed within ten days, differing from a bill filed in the Senate that aims to extend warranty provisions. While I believe the House bill is easier

to understand for both consumers and providers, both approaches seek to target the same issue – a consolidated market for repairs that leaves persons with disabilities and wheelchair users stranded

and without options. At the end of the day, the goal is to expand consumer protection and dramatically improve life for Massachusetts residents who use wheelchairs."

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homeless and less fortunate. A "Somerville Blessing Boxes" Facebook page has been established keep everyone updated on donations and the Blessing Boxes inventory status. Please feel free to join the page and follow all the good that is being done everyday by the good people of Somerville. One blessing box is located at Statue Park in Davis Square and the other is located at Union Square, Plaza in Union Square. "Give what you can, Take what you need." Much thanks and appreciation, Frank Santangelo

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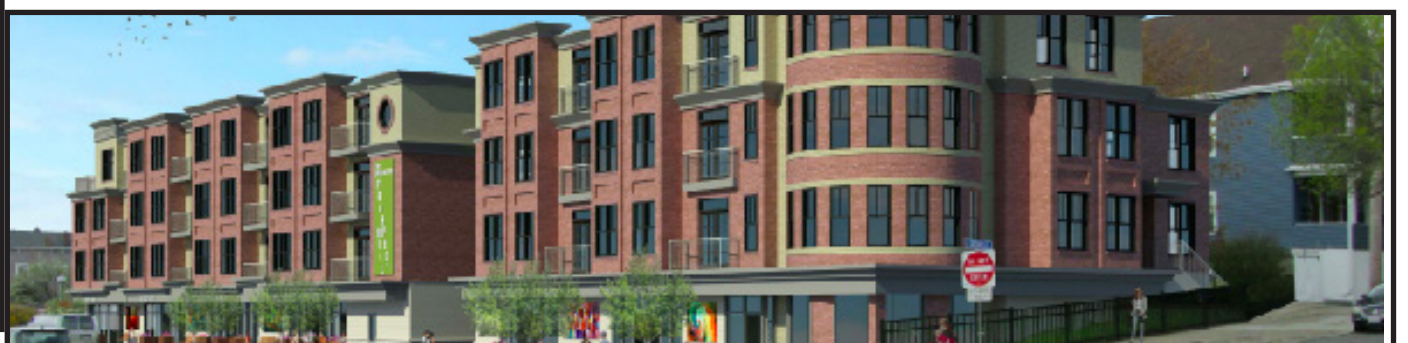
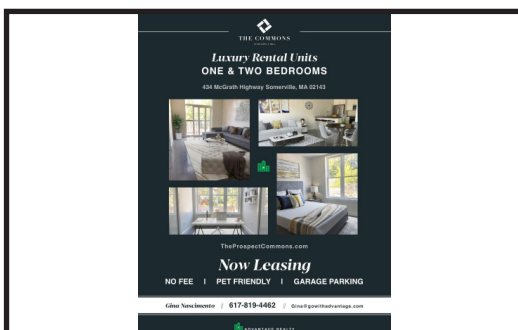
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Mayor Ballantyne and Somerville City Council Approve Changes to Somerville Charter, Now Set to Advance to State Legislature

Committee to be created to form plan for Ranked Choice Voting

Length of Mayoral term to be decided by voters via ballot question

SOMERVILLE – City charters serve as a city’s local constitution, and after an intensive community process and collaborative work by the Ballantyne administration and the City Council, Somerville’s charter is getting a significant update. The new charter

now includes greater transparency, more opportunity for public engagement, important resources for the City Council, and a pathway to ranked choice voting, as well as other modernizations—like officially recognizing women as voters.

The new charter language was approved by a Council vote on charter legislation on Monday, May 5, and Mayor Katjana Ballantyne is signing in full support. The new and improved charter will now be sent to the State Legislature as a Home Rule Petition for review and approval.

The majority of changes are the direct outcome of recommendations by the Charter Review Committee, composed of residents and elected officials. The Council and City then worked to transform those proposals into new Charter language. Key updates include

modernization of procedures and language, the right of the Council to hire Council staff and advisory legal counsel, and designated opportunities for community input on the City budget and capital investment planning that promote inclusive leadership.

The charter also puts two provisions into the hands of the community. Voters will now decide one key committee recommendation at the ballot box: an extension of the 2-year Mayoral term to 4 years. If passed, this would go into effect no earlier than the 2028 term. The Charter also states that a committee will be created to develop a plan to implement ranked choice voting, which allows voters to rank multiple candidates rather than vote for only one.

“With these reforms, we are delivering on key priorities for Somerville. We are increasing transparency, strengthening democracy, supporting the City Council in their work, and ensuring that our charter reflects the values of justice and equity that define our community. It also builds in a key priority of mine, which is inclusive leadership that supports our community members helping to shape our future,” said Mayor Ballantyne.

“I want to thank the Charter Review Committee for their diligent work, recognize Councilor McLaughlin for champi-

oning this effort throughout, and thank the Council for collaborating with my administration to finally deliver on this decades-long goal,” added Ballantyne. “From start to finish, this process has prioritized community voices and a shared vision for Somerville’s future, and we can all be proud of that.”

“We have a 21st-century government operating under a 19th-century charter that doesn’t even acknowledge women voters. But this revised charter now reflects the times we live in and gives us a modern framework,” said Ward 1 Councilor Matt McLaughlin.

“This was a deeply democratic and inclusive process involving residents volunteering extensively and gathering input from thousands to draft this charter,” added McLaughlin. “After months of City Council deliberation and negotiations with two mayors, we’ve reached this point with overwhelming Council and Mayoral support to send it to the State House. It provides crucial improvements, from clear, modern language to addressing the balance of power between the Mayor and City Council in areas like the budget and appointments. Ultimately, this approved charter is light years better.”

Key changes in the updated charter include:

Preamble and Values: A new

preamble explicitly states the charter’s guiding values, such as justice, empowerment, ethical leadership, and equitable opportunity.

City Council Procedures: More detailed procedures for City Council operations enhance transparency and access to information.

Mayoral and Council Powers Regarding Appointments: The charter codifies the Mayor’s role to appoint and the City Council’s role to confirm appointments.

Financial Transparency and Inclusion: A more structured budget process includes requirements for community input opportunities, public access to budget information, and a public hearing on and Council approval of the city’s Capital Investment Plan.

Expanded Council Provisions: Permits the City Council to hire its own advisory legal Counsel and also to hire Council staff.

Bringing an 1899 charter into the 21st century

The City’s charter was initially established in 1871, the same year Somerville was incorporated as a City. Since a more substantial update in 1899, it has undergone only targeted revisions. More recently charter review was launched in 2008. A 2018 City Council initiative modernized the

name “Board of Aldermen” to “City Council.” In 2019, then Councilor Ballantyne initiated an update to shift oversight of the Committee Clerks from the Administration to the City Council to streamline management and improve workflows. In 2021, then Councilor Ballantyne also led the Council in submitting a special act to amend the charter to use gender-neutral language.

Full charter review began in 2020, when former Mayor Joe Curtatone and then City Council President Matt McLaughlin (now Ward 1 Councilor) jointly launched the latest comprehensive review. The Charter Review Committee established as a result met for 16 months and issued a range of recommendations in August 2022. The Ballantyne Administration and City Council then worked collaboratively to update the charter and ensure it met legal standards. The Collins Center for Public Management at UMass Boston provided critical expertise and support.

To view the charter language and more information, visit somervillema.gov/charterreview.

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GAS STOVE WARNING (H464)

By Bob Katzen

Would prohibit anyone from selling a gas stove that is produced or manufactured after January 1, 2026, without a warning label affixed to the stove. The warning label would read as follows:

“Warning: Gas stoves can release nitrogen dioxide and carbon monoxide inside homes at levels exceeding the Environmental Protection Agency’s standards for outdoor air quality. The presence of these pollutants may exacerbate pre-existing respiratory illnesses or lead to the development of asthma,

especially in children. Gas stoves may also release other pollutants, including benzene and formaldehyde.”

“Gas stoves emit pollutants that can harm health — irritating airways, and cause or exacerbate respiratory problems,” said sponsor Rep.

Amy Sangiolo (D-Newton). “They burn natural gas which generates nitrogen dioxide which is known to have harmful health effects – irritating lungs and exacerbating or even causing respiratory conditions including asthma. Unburned natural gas contains benzene – a known carcinogen. Requiring warning

labels is an efficient and effective way to ensure that consumers have the information they need to make an informed decision on their purchases.”

This Week’s QUOTABLE QUOTES On Beacon Hill

“Our annual Advocacy Day is an opportunity to highlight the incredible impact assisted living has on the lives of older adults across Massachusetts. By sharing personal stories and advocating for policies like the Frail Elder Waiver expansion, we can ensure that more individuals have access to the care, community and independence that assisted living provides.”
—Mass Assisted Living Association (ALA) CEO Brian Doherty hosting the group’s annual Advocacy Day on Beacon Hill.

“For hundreds of years, agricultural fairs have been a way for the public to understand the importance of farming and how a thriving agricultural sector benefits everyone. Long before grocery stores and supermarkets, farmers sold their products directly to consumers.”
—Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources Commissioner Ashley Randle announcing that the Healey Administration awarded over \$2 million in grants to support agricultural fairs, farmers markets and programming to strengthen ‘Buy Local’ groups in Massachusetts.

“We are proud to see Massachusetts recognized as the best state for working moms in the country. Our greatest strength is our people. We are home to the best childcare programs and schools, the most innovative businesses and a strong paid family medical leave program. Our administration has made progress to expand the number of childcare seats, increase educator wages and stabilize childcare business.”
—Gov. Maura Healey celebrating a recent national ranking of Massachusetts as the best state for working moms, beating out larger states like Florida and California and neighboring states

like Connecticut, Rhode Island and New Hampshire.

“It was an honor to be part of today’s Healthy Youth Summit, standing alongside leaders who are committed to building safer, stronger communities. As a kid from Boston, I know first-hand the challenges young people face and how important it is to have people in your corner. Through the work of Boston Athletic Academy and events like this, I’m proud to help create opportunities for kids to build resilience, trust and confidence. Whether it’s on a team, in the classroom, or in life,

every young person deserves a support system. I’m honored to represent the Red Sox and be part of the effort to set them up for success.”

— Manny Delcarmen, former Boston Red Sox player, on the Healey Administration hosting the first-ever Healthy Youth Summit, a one-day conference aimed to equip local high school students with practical tools for healthy relationships with their peers, family members and the broader community.

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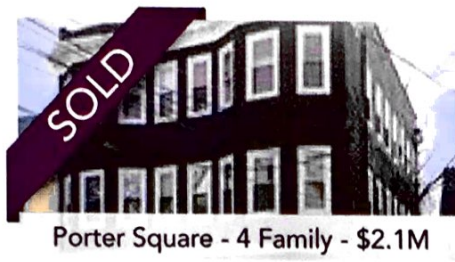
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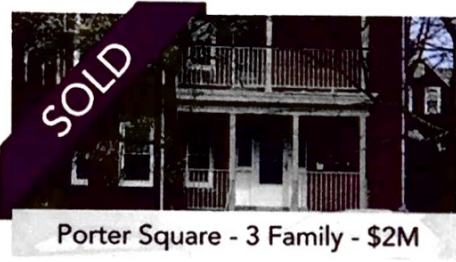
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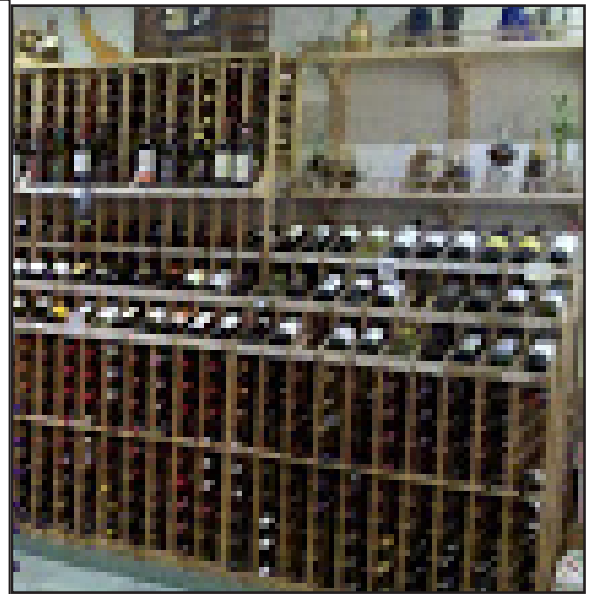


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